THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) There is, at present, no regulatory prohibition on export of U.S. high technology items to India, though policy-related restrictions continue to remain in place on export of certain categories of "dual use" goods and technologies to India.

(c) and (d) The Government is engaged in a dialogue with the United States to develop, expand and facilitate bilateral high technology commerce. The two countries have established a bilateral High Technology Cooperation Group that held its second meeting in New Delhi on November 20, 2003. This is the first such group that the United States has set up with any country. The Group discussed, *inter alia,* regulatory and promotional issues related to enhancing bilateral trade in high technology, including in "dual use" goods and technologies. As a result of these discussions and political dialogue between the two countries, there has been an improvement in transfer of "dual use" goods and technologies to India.

Additional Ambassador level official at Indian Embassy in USA

1021. SHRI RAJEEA/ SHUKLA:

DR. VIJAY MALLYA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in addition to the Indian Ambassador in USA, another official of the same rank is operating in USA;

(b) if so, what specific role has been assigned to him particularly in regard to NRIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) in the USA; and

(c) the details of the action already taken and proposed to be taken by him in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) there is only one official designated as the Ambassador of India to USA. However, two officers are designated in the rank of 'Ambassador' for functional reasons, which includes Permanent Representative of India to UN, New York, and special Adviser to the Permanent Mission of India and Ambassador-at-Large to NRIs/PIOs based in New York.

(b) The Government of India appointed Ambassador-at-Large (AAL) for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), with the aim to strategically promote better coordination within the NRI/PIO community as well as economic cooperation, investment and commerce by NRIs/PIOs with India and other countries.

(c) The mandate of Ambassador-at-Large for NRIs and PIOs is global and not limited to USA. Action taken and to be taken by his office, *inter-alia* include:—

(i) Visit to the countries with large diaspora presence to establish contact and network with various Indian organization.

(ii) Preparation of reports giving suggestions/proposals/ recommendations and organization of meeting and workshops covering youth and students, enhancement of India's image in the ethnic media, inter-religious meet, Indo-Caribbean leadership forum and youth and diaspora students etc. A number of workshops in these areas are in the offing.

(iii) Functioning of a Grievances and Complaints Cell which attends to more than 1000 queries per month from all over the globe pertaining to diaspora issues, seeking information and Consular complaints.

(iv) Managing a website which provides NRI/PIO related information and about the services provided by AAL's office.

(v) Organization of a Public Meeting for the Prime Minister with Indo-American community in September, 2003. More than 4000 participated in the meeting.

(vi) Promotion of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)-2003 and PBD-2004 for large scale diaspora participation.

(vii) Providing support and interaction base to visiting VIPs. Members of Parliament, State and Central Ministers with the NRI segment in socio-cultural. investment and other areas.

Denial of contracts to Indian firms

1022. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian firms, though offering lowest